



California Postsecondary Education Commission

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University Enrollment Figures Show Glaring Inequities in Access to Higher Education

SACRAMENTO — March 16, 2007 — Recent college-going figures confirm that the state is not making progress in delivering the promise of higher education to all students leaving high school. A report to be delivered at a meeting of the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) on March 20–21, 2007, in Sacramento shows that college-going rates in California vary dramatically depending on students' ethnicity, gender, and the type of neighborhood where the student's high school is located.

The Commission's report shows that Latino and African-American males have very low college-going rates and that rates for students from schools in poorer neighborhoods are much lower than for students from schools in more affluent neighborhoods.

Only 1.3% of male African-American graduates from high schools in low-income areas entered the University of California (UC) in 2005. Even for schools in high-income areas, where college-going rates are generally higher, the UC college-going rate for male African-Americans was only 3.3%. These figures are well below the statewide average UC college-going rate of about 7%.

At the California State University, college-going rates for male African-Americans were 5.9% for schools in low-income areas and 10.7% for schools in high-income areas. The statewide average CSU college-going rate is 10.7%.

"The state has a goal — it's there in statute — that we should provide a place in higher education for every student who is willing and able to benefit from attendance. But we simply are not delivering these places to students from low-income areas and to groups who have historically not participated in college," said Olivia K. Singh, Chair of the Commission.

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“The state will spend \$15 billion this year on higher education — that’s over \$900 for each taxpayer,” added Murray J. Haberman, Executive Director of the Commission. “One of the reasons why we spend this money is to give everybody a chance for a college education. We need to think more about how we are spending our education dollars. There are some schools in poorer areas that are doing quite well with college-going. The Commission is looking at what these schools are doing, to see what we can learn about getting more students from all backgrounds to qualify for and enter universities.”

The report also has figures comparing college-going in California with other states. These figures show that overall, just over a quarter of California’s high school graduates enroll at four-year public and private universities shortly after completing high school. This college-going rate is much lower than the national average of 38 percent and lower than all other states except Arizona and Mississippi.

A full copy of the report *California Higher Education Accountability: Goal—College Access and Preparation. Measure: Direct College-Going Rates* can be found at http://www.cpec.ca.gov/Agendas/Agenda0703/Item_13.pdf.

The March 20–21, 2007, Commission meeting will be streamed live on the Internet at <http://www.cpec.ca.gov>. Previous meetings are recorded and can also be heard via the Commission’s website.

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The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. The Commission’s primary focus is to ensure that the state’s educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities.